

CLASSIFYING DIVERSITY: COMPOSER IDENTITIES AND THE COMPOSER DIVERSITY DATABASE

Gavin Goodwin

A growing movement within the classical music community to increase diversity among concert programming and feature the work of traditionally underrepresented communities has highlighted the shortcomings of traditional music score cataloguing, classification, and retrieval systems. Current academic and music libraries present difficulties in locating musical scores based on personal identities of composers such as gender, sexual orientation, race, or ethnic origins. The Institute for Composer Diversity at SUNY Fredonia has created the Composer Diversity Database to help address these shortcomings. Designed as a searchable index to identify composers and musical works by personal identities, the database project is an ever-growing resource geared towards performers and concert programmers to allow discovery of new composers.

This presentation will offer an overview of the current Western art music landscape regarding concert programming and academic & community urgings for increased diversity, an historical overview of cataloguing and classification failings of marginalized or oppressed groups (particularly with those relevant to music bibliography), an evaluation of current efforts to include demographic data in bibliographic and authority records, and a presentation and analysis of the Composer Diversity Database project through their approach of indexing diverse identities, the overall usefulness of the resources as reference and information resource for academic libraries, as well as the long term impacts it or resources like it could have as sources of authority data, especially for self-published musical works.